

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

February 11, 2010

Present:

**Linda Noble Carl Brunetti Joe Renning Jay O'Grady Bob
Ericson
Sheila Chisholm Claudette Lussier Greg Leonard Hagop Jawharjian**

Absent:

John Picozzi Cheryl Ethier

Call To Order

The meeting began at 7:35 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The minutes of January 14, 2010 were distributed for review.

Greg Leonard made a motion, seconded by Claudette Lussier, to approve the minutes of January 14th. The minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.

Correspondence

There was correspondence regarding the schools' 30% reimbursement on capital.

There was also correspondence from the Town Administrator answering some questions from the Budget Board.

It noted that there was an excess of \$76,590 spent on capital over the capital resolution, but it appears to have been adhered to this year as the necessary projects were done, and there should be enough in surplus to cover the one-time overage.

The Budget Board discussed the wording of the capital resolutions, and the fact that the schools are required to complete at least the list of items that are specified in a capital resolution.

Public Comment

Jack Santos of Saylesville stated that he was at the meeting when the School Department presented their recommendations to the Town Administrator, and he talked about the teachers' requests for raises.

Bob Ericson made a motion, seconded by Joe Renning to move the discussion of the municipal budget to be next on the agenda because the Town Administrator was present to discuss it.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Town Administrator noted that the budget he presents assumes revenue numbers will stay on track with how they are now.

The audit package is complete, and the management letter will be a part of it but must go to the Town Council first.

According to the Finance Director, it makes references to communication and controls.

There is a small operating surplus, and the Town was able to add to all restricted surpluses due to a greater reduction in spending than revenues.

The new Chart of Accounts is in place and should allow the school budget to be able to close out sooner after the end of the Fiscal Year. The Finance Director provides the school reports to the auditors, so he will need to work with the schools to have the information needed by August before the audit process begins.

John Ward, the Finance Director, discussed car tax revenues, and how the plan to phase out the car taxes has changed, so now there may be a drop in the collectable rate.

Old Business

The School Department 2009/2010 budget was briefly discussed.

It was noted that there was no opportunity for public comment at the School Committees' budget workshops.

The Budget Board will take a tour of the schools focusing on capital improvements on March 13th at 8:00 am with a list of the School Department's list of requests prioritized with emphasis on code enforcement and regulation compliance.

The 2009/2010 Municipal Budget was discussed.

The Budget Board noted that the municipal budget tends to be very

lean, and they wanted to speak with the Town Administrator about it to be sure infrastructure in the Town is not being overlooked.

Also, it was noted that a lot of the Town's pensions rely on an 8% return on investments, and the Budget Board wondered if the return rates were more dismal than that.

New Business

School Budget Discussion:

Linda Noble had received correspondence will she will share at the next meeting with the Budget Board regarding the 30% reimbursement on School Capital Improvements.

There is not yet anything to report in the form of year-to-date reports. Apparently, there was a surplus last year and a deficit this year so far of \$300,000.

The members of the Budget Board will each take a piece of the School Budget to analyze.

The schools' budget worksheet was distributed, and it was noted that the schools will need a contingency plan budget in anticipation of state aid reductions.

The Budget Board discussed how to determine what figures are the actual student enrollment numbers.

Municipal Budget Discussion:

In discussing the Town's Police Cruisers, the Budget Board would like to have research and thoughts behind the proposal, and also wanted to know if the Town had explored any alternatives to the current system.

There will be a Public Hearing of the Town Administrator's Proposed Budget in March per the charter.

In reference to the Financial Town Meeting quorum, Jay O'Grady noted that in East Greenwich, if the quorum is lost the budget stands as it is altered at the point of the lost quorum. He also noted that Lincoln's quorum is 100 people but should perhaps be a ratio of registered voters.

It was noted that there is a 4.5% cap over last year's levy on this year's budget.

Bob Ericson talked about having an enterprise fund for trash collection and emergency services, which has not really been discussed yet.

Public Comment

Jack Santos suggested, if it is feasible, having a trash collection system in a few locations within town as an idea to consolidate and

not have to pay for all of the expenses associated with trash pick up.

Ken Booth noted that if the Financial Town Meeting loses its quorum during the meeting and the charter called for the budget to be adopted as changed, the actions before the quorum was lost could leave the budget over the cap, which is why it is important that any motion that puts the budget over the cap be ruled out of order.

It was noted that this should be mentioned in the charter, as well as maybe adding a limit to any alterations to the budget.

Adjourn

Carl Brunetti made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Greg Leonard.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.